

July 2014 Newsletter

CIRM July Newsletter

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Innovative CIRM-Funded HIV Therapy Trial Reaches Milestone



On June 25th, Calimmune announced encouraging safety data from its innovative gene-based stem cell therapy, Cal-1-being developed to help cure individuals infected with HIV. The Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) found none of the participants experienced any serious adverse events or dangerous side effects from the therapy so Calimmune can now begin treating the second group of patients in the trial, which is being funded in part by a CIRM grant. The Phase I/II clinical trial focuses on a protein called CCR5 that plays a key role in enabling HIV to infect cells. Blocking CCR5 may provide the cells a protective shield against HIV, which in turn would help retain immune system functionality.

- [Read the full press release](#)
- [Read our blog about this milestone](#)

CIRM Hosts "Meet the New President" Public Sessions Throughout the State



In June, CIRM held three public events to give patient advocates, researchers, supporters and anyone who was interested a chance to hear newly appointed President C. Randal Mills, PhD, talk about his vision for the agency and his goals for the future. The well-attended meetings took place in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. President Mills' key message was that everything the agency does should be "all about the patients". Mills took over the post from Alan Trounson, PhD, who led the agency for the last six years, and stepped down to spend more time with his family in Australia.

- [Read our blog for more details about the meetings](#)

CIRM Organizes All-Day Stem Cell Forum at International Biotech Conference



For the first time ever at BIO International, the largest annual biotechnology conference in North America, stem cells and regenerative medicine were featured in an all-day forum. The forum - organized by CIRM, the Alliance for Regenerative Medicine and the International Society for Stem Cell Research - was composed of five panels with leaders in the field who provided valuable insights about a range of topics including: Propelling a Paradigm Shift in Medicine and Healthcare Delivery; Stem Cells Delivering Results Today as Models of Disease; Stem Cells and Gene Therapy, a Great but Challenging Marriage; Commercializing a New Therapeutic Modality—Case Studies; and How International Collaboration Is Accelerating the Field.

- [Read our blog series about the BIO 2014 forum](#)

New Videos: Spotlight on Preeclampsia and Stem Cell Research



Preeclampsia is a disorder of the placenta that complicates 5-8% of all pregnancies worldwide and is the leading cause of maternal death in the developed world. It's also the leading cause of fetal growth restriction and there's no cure except to deliver the baby. Due to this fact preeclampsia is the number one cause of induced preterm delivery in the U.S. Babies that survive often spend months in neonatal intensive care and have many complications. At the May governing Board meeting, CIRM grantee Dr. Mana Parast, a UCSD perinatal pathologist, discussed her goal of using the induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cell technique to screen for drugs that might lead

to a treatment for preeclampsia. Silvia Michelazzi, a preeclampsia survivor, and her husband Dr. Matteo Moretto-Zito shared their daughter's birth story with the Board.

- Watch the Spotlight on Preeclampsia videos
- Read our blog about the Spotlight presentations

Tales from Annual Stem Cell Conference: The ISSCR 2014 CIRM Blogs



In June, several members of CIRM's science team attended the 12th annual meeting of the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) in Vancouver. Kevin McCormack and Don Gibbons of CIRM's communications team also attended and reported on the meeting as it unfolded in a series of blogs. The wide range of blog topics included: balancing patient optimism with medical evidence, the power of tissue engineering, and the impact of Twitter on people's knowledge of stem cells, to name just a few.

- Read our ISSCR 2014 blog series

The Latest Publications on CIRM-funded Research

CIRM grantees are making steady progress on understanding the molecular basis of stem cell biology and moving stem cell-based therapies toward clinical trials. Here are examples of CIRM-funded research that was published in June along with press releases from the grantees' home institutions and entries from the CIRM Stem Cell Research Blog:

June 2nd - Cancer Cell

- UCSD Release: Melanoma of the eye caused by 2 gene mutations
- CIRM Blog: CIRM-Funded Scientists Identify Cause; Potential Therapy for Deadly Form of Eye Cancer

June 3rd - Nature Communications

- Stanford Release: Coaxing iPS cells to become more specialized prior to transplantation cuts rejection risk, study shows
- CIRM Blog: What a difference differentiation can make: a little change can reduce the risk of rejection

June 11th - Nature Communications

- UC Berkeley Release: 'Trust hormone' oxytocin helps old muscle work like new, study finds
- CIRM Blog: 'Trust Hormone' Reverses Age-Related Damage in Mice, CIRM-Funded Study Finds

June 16th - Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

- UCLA Release: Heart muscle can regenerate itself in very limited amounts, scientists find
- CIRM Blog: The Great Divide: CIRM-Funded Research Resolves Controversy over the Regenerative Powers of Heart Cells

June 19th - Stem Cell

- UCLA Release: UCLA scientists identify link between stem cell regulation and the development of lung cancer
- CIRM Blog: Cells Behaving Badly: Rogue Stem Cells Set Stage for Lung Cancer, CIRM-Funded Study Finds

Upcoming CIRM Events

July 24th: The CIRM governing Board will hold its next meeting at the Westin SFO in Burlingame, CA. The agenda and details will be posted to the **meetings page** 10 days before the event.

CIRM Funding Opportunities

Current Applications

PA 14-04: CIRM Extraordinary Supplement Awards - Prior to submitting an application, a PI must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) describing the proposed project. CIRM will evaluate the LOI -- refer to Section V.A. of the PA for evaluation criteria. **This PA is targeted at only the most exceptional proposals: CIRM expects to support only one or two such projects each year.**

RFA 13-04: External Innovation Pilot Program - Prior to submitting an application, a PI must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) describing the proposed project. CIRM will evaluate the LOI -- refer to Section VIII.A. of the RFA for evaluation criteria. **This RFA is targeted at only the most exceptional proposals: CIRM expects to support only one or two such projects each year.**

Get more info about CIRM RFAs

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